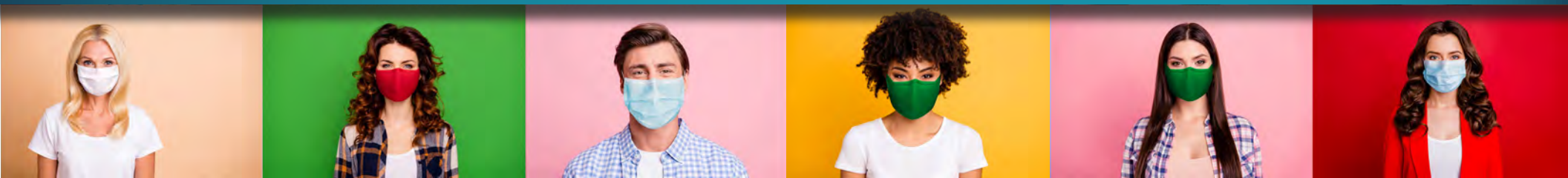




# Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Initiative FY 2020 Annual Progress Report

U.S. Department of Education \* Office of Inspector General



Office of Inspector General  
Sandra D. Bruce  
Acting Inspector General

December 2020

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# Message from the Acting Inspector General

In 2019, the U.S. Department of Education (Department) Office of Inspector General (OIG) issued our first [Diversity and Inclusion Strategic Plan](#). Through the plan, we affirmed and advanced our long-standing commitment to a diverse, equitable, and inclusive workforce and workplace environment to help ensure that the work we produce is accessible to the diverse public we serve. In that plan, we outlined how we would develop, implement, and sustain a workplace culture where we embrace our differences because we know they are our strengths, and one where our shared values are the guiding principle for how we conduct our work. Our plan also noted our commitment to transparency with critical issues such as diversity, equity, and inclusion, because it is not what we say but what we do that truly demonstrates that we are taking our goals and commitment seriously. With the first year of our strategic plan now completed, I am happy to report that thanks to the dedication and commitment of OIG employees at all levels, we made progress in implementing our initiative in fiscal year (FY) 2020 and are on the path forward to doing even more in FY 2021.

In the pages of this report, you will see what we accomplished in our first year, which is our baseline year, a story that started as diversity and inclusion but now also includes equity—because diversity and inclusion are empty concepts until everyone included is treated justly and fairly and has equal access to the same opportunities.

We see this story in two bold parts. In part 1, we began to build the framework of our initiative: we established a Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee composed of staff from all OIG components. We also identified a baseline understanding of what “diversity,” “equity,” and “inclusion” meant to staff as individuals and the OIG as a whole. We also organized diversity, equity, and inclusion training on topics such as unconscious bias to raise awareness of automatic patterns of thinking. Additionally, we offered information sessions where OIG leaders with diverse backgrounds shared challenges they faced or mistakes they made in the workplace related to diversity, equity, and inclusion and how they turned these into learning experiences, enabling them to take their careers to the next level.

Part 2 was and continues to be an unexpected and unprecedented challenge, as defined by the coronavirus pandemic. The coronavirus pandemic changed the way we conduct our

work, closing OIG offices, and instituting a 100-percent telework environment. In the spring, we learned about the disproportionate impact of the coronavirus on minority groups and communities. In the summer, we witnessed widespread protests across the country. We did not ignore these events and the impact they had on our employees, their families, and communities; rather, we faced them and bolstered our commitment to championing our diversity, equity, and inclusion initiative. We created virtual discussions to foster a sense of belonging and connection, encouraging staff to raise concerns or share their thoughts on what was happening, while still carrying out the OIG's mission. Together, working with staff from remote locations throughout the country, we developed a connected and cohesive culture where diverse talents thrive, and where all OIG employees understand the role they play in creating an environment where everyone can succeed. The pandemic and working remotely reminded us that it's not our physical proximity that connects us but our shared commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion that connects us to one another and keeps us moving forward.

The challenges we faced through this pandemic did not deter OIG staff from collaborating with one another to produce a body of work that covered a wide range of Federal education issues. This included audit-related work specific to the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act, the Jeanne Clery Disclosure of Campus Security Policy and Campus Crime Statistics Act, the Every Student Succeeds Act, and issues specific to Federal student aid, such as total and permanent disability student loan discharges and verification of data included in students' Free Applications for Federal Student Aid. Our investigative work led to criminal actions that stopped a number of student loan debt relief scams, student loan fraud rings, public corruption cases of embezzlement and fraud involving K-12 and college officials, and unauthorized access to and misuse of Department data systems. You can read more about these audits and investigations in our [Semiannual Reports to Congress](#).

I am so proud of OIG employees for their commitment to one another and to this important initiative in its first year, and I look forward to what this team achieves in FY 2021. We will ensure compliance with Executive Order 13950, "Combating Race and Sex Stereotyping," and any changes or guidance pertaining thereto as we continue on our path forward to becoming a better, higher performing 21st century organization that is open to the contributions, skills, and strengths, which is best achieved through a diverse, equitable, and inclusive workforce.



Sandra D. Bruce  
Acting Inspector General





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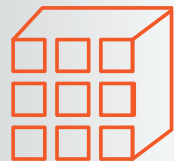


The more diverse  
our voices and perspectives are,  
the more innovative we can be.

# Purpose and Goals of the Initiative

The purpose of the OIG Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Initiative is to build, foster, and sustain a work environment that allows all employees to reach their full potential, spurs creativity and productivity, and allows us to attract and retain an empowered staff so the OIG can exceed its goals and further its mission to America's taxpayers and students.

The goals of this Initiative align with the OIG's organizational goals set in its statutory Five-Year Strategic Plan (FY 2018–2022). Those goals are to (1) deliver high-quality, timely, and impactful products and services that promote efficiency, effectiveness, and integrity in the Department's operations and programs; (2) cultivate a diverse, highly skilled, and inspired workforce; and (3) implement internal processes that promote organizational effectiveness, stewardship of resources, and accountability. Our Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Initiative also heeds the call of Executive Order 13583, "Establishing a Coordinated Government-wide Initiative to Promote Diversity and Inclusion in the Federal Workforce," so we may use the talents of all segments of society in creating a culture that encourages collaboration, flexibility, and fairness.



**Build a  
Framework**



**Foster**



**Sustain**

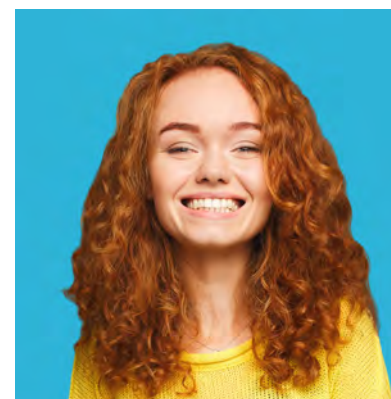
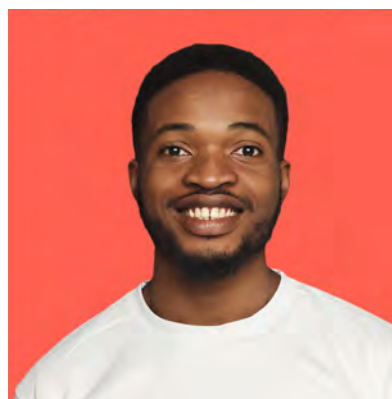
# FY 2020 Progress Report

The OIG Diversity and Inclusion Strategic Plan states our commitment to implementing a robust plan that includes timeliness, deliverables, and effective measurement tools that are consistent with our diversity, equity, and inclusion vision and mission. The plan includes specific goals we sought to complete by the end of FY 2020. The following table summarizes our success in completing those goals.

## FY 2020 Implementation Goals

FY 2020 Implementation Goals	Status
Create specific timelines for implementing diversity, equity, and inclusion.	Ongoing
Outline any challenges.	Ongoing
Develop performance measures for managers and the leadership team to establish accountability for diversity, equity, and inclusion.	Completed
Develop performance measures for employees to establish accountability for diversity, equity, and inclusion.	Completed
Appoint leaders for the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee.	Completed
Establish a work group focused on diversity, equity, and inclusion in the OIG workplace.	Completed
Diversity, equity, and inclusion work group develops a training and communication plan.	Ongoing
Train all staff on diversity, equity, and inclusion and unconscious bias.	Completed
Update hiring policies to include diversity, equity, and inclusion.	Completed
Monitor the diversity report on OIG's current staff.	Completed
Develop hiring strategies to address diversity, equity, and inclusion.	Completed





## Snapshot: OIG Workforce

The OIG is composed of staff from different States, countries, and backgrounds, ages, abilities, languages, and socioeconomic statuses. Each person brings his or her own perspective to the workplace, which in turn creates a multifaceted environment with wide-ranging viewpoints and creative problem-solving. The OIG believes that the more diverse our voices and perspectives are, the more innovative we can be. This is particularly true in the OIG's efforts to provide oversight of and accountability in the widely diverse programs the Department administers, and the widely diverse State and local educational agencies, institutions of higher education, and students who participate in those programs.

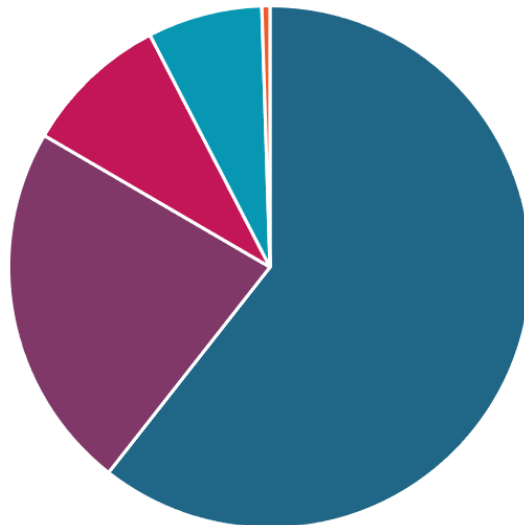
The following is a look at the race and ethnicity and gender makeup of the OIG staff and leadership in FY 2019 before we initiated our Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Initiative, and our progress at the end of FY 2020, our first year of implementation. We have more work to do, but we are moving in a direction of becoming a better, higher performing 21st century organization, which is achieved through a diverse workforce and an equitable and inclusive workplace.

# Race and Ethnicity

## All OIG Staff

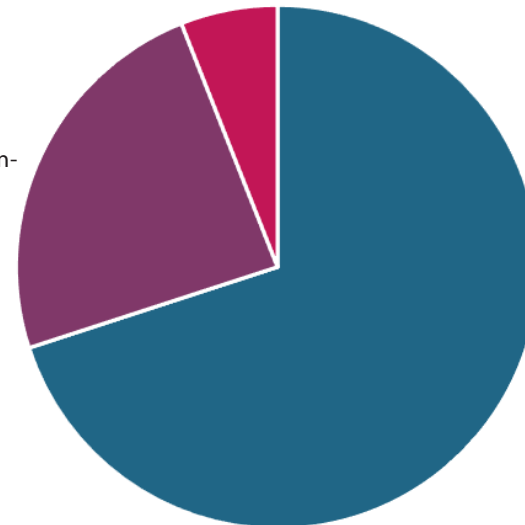
FY 2019

- White 61%
- Black or African-American 23%
- Hispanic or Latino 9%
- Asian 7%
- Other >1%



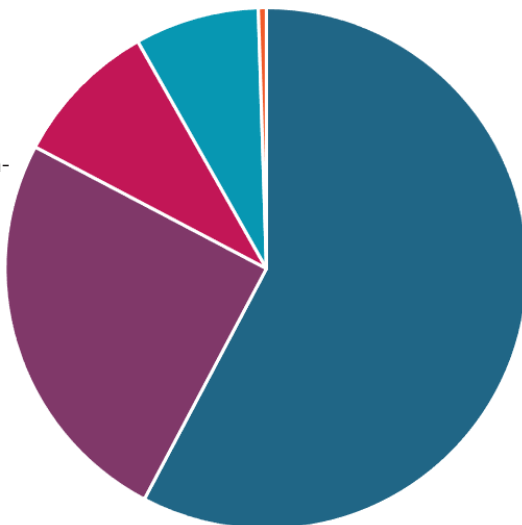
## OIG Leadership

- White 70%
- Black or African-American 24%
- Hispanic or Latino 6%

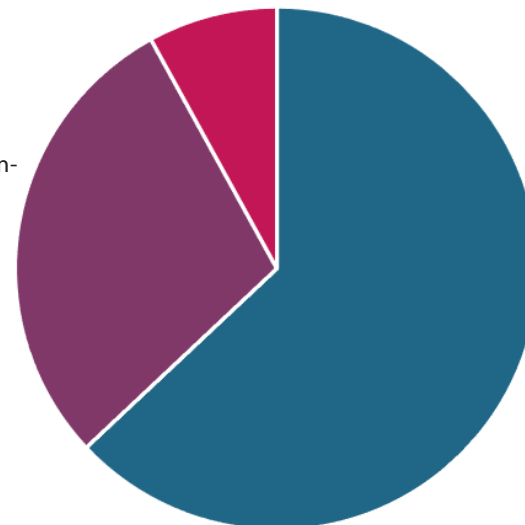


FY 2020

- White 58%
- Black or African-American 25%
- Hispanic or Latino 9%
- Asian 8%
- Other >1%



- White 63%
- Black or African-American 29%
- Hispanic or Latino 8%

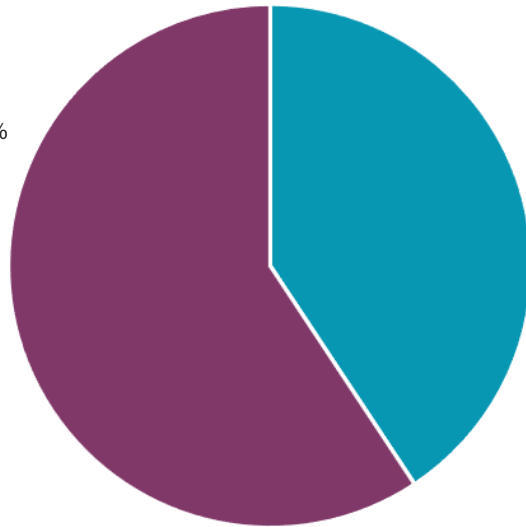


# Gender

## All OIG Staff

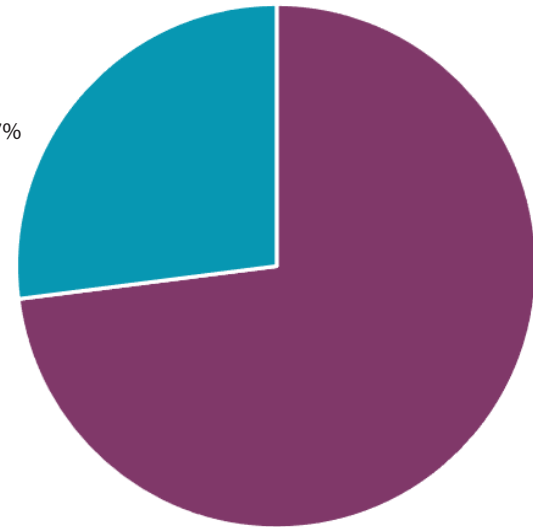
**FY 2019**

■ Female 41%  
■ Male 59%



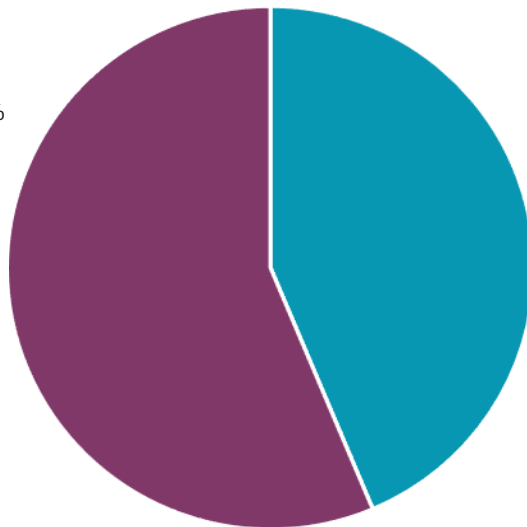
## OIG Leadership

■ Female 27%  
■ Male 73%

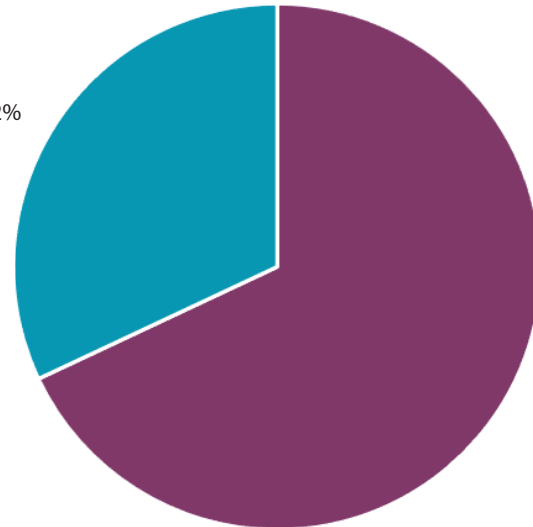


**FY 2020**

■ Female 44%  
■ Male 56%



■ Female 32%  
■ Male 68%





# FY 2020 Progress by Goal

Our Diversity and Inclusion Strategic Plan for FY 2019–FY 2022 presents three overarching goals, along with strategies and action steps to reach those goals. In our first year, we made progress in initiating actions to reach those goals, a number of which are ongoing as we work to incorporate them into our policies and procedures. The following sections present the results of and progress made in year one by goal.

## Goal 1: Build a framework for diversity, equity, and inclusion that is predicated on the need for awareness of human differences in the workforce.

*1.1. Heighten awareness of diversity, equity, and inclusion in the workforce to advance diversity, equity, and inclusion at all levels of the organization.*

Action	Status
Articulate a clear statement of diversity, equity, and inclusion for the OIG.	Ongoing
Develop a representative Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee.	Completed
Develop a communications strategy on diversity, equity, and inclusion that encompasses various communications formats.	Ongoing
Benchmark with other agencies to determine best practices.	Ongoing
Establish periodic formal updates to inform employees of progress on diversity, equity, and inclusion strategic goals.	Completed
Create and maintain opportunities for engagement, education, and discourse related to issues of diversity, equity, and inclusion.	Ongoing

### Highlights

The OIG understands that our diversity is a strength, and that effective leadership comes from leaders who are responsive to the needs of their employees. Our ability to embrace diversity, equity, and inclusion and lead by example is an integral part of our success as an agency.

In FY 2020, we established a representative committee called the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee, composed of staff from all OIG components—Audit Services; Investigation Services;

Information Technology, Audits, and Computer Crime Investigations; Management Services; Counsel; Congressional, Public Affairs, and Communications Services; and our Quality and Integrity Group. The committee operates within a charter and a plan to regularly communicate information about diversity, equity, and inclusion to all staff members and to articulate what diversity, equity, and inclusion look like within our OIG. The committee works toward success by setting milestones and goals related to engagement, education, and discussion and through collaboration with other agencies to determine best practices.

To promote engagement, education, and discourse related to issues of diversity, equity, and inclusion, OIG leadership held a Success Prep Executive Talk featuring questions for senior leadership about how diversity, equity, and inclusion are a part of our daily operations. The OIG intends to conduct similar sessions in FY 2021.

*1.2. Foster an organizational culture of inclusion where all employees treat each other respectfully and fairly, and all employees have work-life balance and opportunities to excel in their positions.*

Action	Status
Provide effective leadership in promoting diversity and understanding of differences.	Ongoing
Support participation in employee advisory groups.	Ongoing
Use the Employee Viewpoint Survey to assess the OIG's working environment.	Ongoing
Identify and address barriers in the workplace and develop targeted actions.	Ongoing

### *Highlights*

The success of a workplace can be measured in a number of ways, including through employee satisfaction surveys. In FY 2020, the OIG assessed staff responses to the 2019 Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey and used that data to identify any issues involving barriers to employee success and set a baseline for employee engagement and workplace satisfaction going forward.

OIG employees at all levels are encouraged to participate in employee advisory groups, and we use the feedback from these groups to ensure that we continue to provide effective leadership that promotes diversity, inclusion, and understanding of differences. Senior staff members are empowered to use employee feedback and work with the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee to address those areas identified by employees as needing improvement.

## Goal 2: Foster diversity, equity, and inclusion by building a diverse workforce that will help achieve the OIG vision of excellence in government service.

*2.1. Attract and retain diverse, talented, and skilled personnel to secure and maintain a high-performance workforce drawn from all segments of society.*

Action	Status
Ensure hiring managers use a diverse selection panel during the hiring process.	Completed
Evaluate current recruitment strategies and adjust as needed to improve target areas.	Ongoing
Include hiring managers in recruitment activities, including career fairs and outreach activities.	Ongoing
Ensure equal access to appropriate developmental opportunities.	Ongoing
Incorporate diversity, equity, and inclusion debrief in exit interviews and implement corrective actions as appropriate.	Completed
Create and maintain opportunities for engagement, education, and discourse related to issues of diversity, equity, and inclusion.	Ongoing

### *Highlights*

Throughout FY 2020, hiring managers kept the tenets of diversity, equity, and inclusion front of mind. Staff ensured that a diverse selection panel was involved in the hiring process from the beginning stages of recruitment. The OIG also created new recruitment materials that highlighted our commitment to a diverse, inclusive, and equitable workforce and work environment. Those brochures are available on the OIG's [career webpage](#), which was developed during this fiscal year. We also ensured that our recruitment strategies and activities including career fairs and other outreach activities reflected this commitment. Due to COVID-19, as of March 2020 recruitment strategies and activities were conducted exclusively online.

Our commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion did not stop when the hiring process was completed. When new staff were brought on board, we provided equal access to appropriate



developmental opportunities and opportunities for engagement, education, and discourse relating to diversity, equity, and inclusion. When employees resigned or retired from the OIG, we ensured that questions specific to diversity, equity, and inclusion were a part of the exit interview process. We intend to use that feedback to improve our workforce operations, as appropriate.

*2.2. Develop practices and strategies to equip leadership with the ability to manage diversity, achieve results, and refine approaches to inclusion, and equity.*

Action	Status
Educate leaders on unconscious biases in the workplace.	Completed
Provide leadership and management with tools to effectively manage a diverse workforce.	Ongoing
Include diversity, equity, and inclusion performance objectives for the leadership and management team.	Completed

*Highlights*

Unconscious biases are stereotypes or beliefs we aren’t aware that we carry with us. They may prevent us from connecting with others or understanding that our differences are a positive and not a negative. Understanding our biases helps us to counteract them and helps lay the foundation for a truly collaborative, inclusive, and effective workforce. Though the OIG operated in a 100-percent telework posture since March 2020 due to the pandemic, we recognized that none of us work in true isolation—collaboration is more important than ever. OIG leaders and staff participated in trainings aimed at recognizing biases and how to minimize the impact to diversity, equity, and inclusion.

Further, OIG leaders empower employees at all levels to understand their own unconscious biases and how they might impact their work or the collaborative work environment. We have empowered a cadre of leadership and management teams who are equipped to effectively manage a diverse workforce. We also included diversity, equity, and inclusion performance objectives in all employees’ performance plans.

### Goal 3: Sustain diversity, equity, and inclusion by committing to a work environment that promotes diversity and equal opportunity, fosters mutual trust, respect for human rights, and no discrimination.

*3.1. Build and sustain a commitment from leadership for a diverse, inclusive, and equitable organization through accountability, data, and education.*

Action	Status
Leverage both qualitative and quantitative metrics to manage diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts; use results and refine strategies as needed.	Ongoing
Identify measurable metrics for each goal and action of the diversity, equity, and inclusion strategic plan.	Ongoing
Annually review and analyze OIG demographics data.	Ongoing
Develop action plans to address areas of concern.	Ongoing
Provide quarterly reporting and hold meetings around diversity, equity, and inclusion actions.	Ongoing
Produce an annual diversity, equity, and inclusion progress report	Completed for FY 2020

#### *Highlights*

Though these measures have been formally tracked for only a year, the OIG takes pride in prioritizing diversity, equity, and inclusion as a part of our core values of excellence, accountability, and integrity. In FY 2020, the OIG continued to self-regulate our commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion through a strategic plan with qualitative and quantitative metrics that can be used to refine our strategies in real time because we understand that issues of diversity, equity, and inclusion may be fluid and require thoughtful response. The OIG has taken leading in times of change as part of our mission, and we continue to strive to connect the tenets of diversity, equity, and inclusion with our core values.

OIG leadership understands the importance of the perspective of employees at all levels when considering changes that would impact them. Going forward, the OIG will monitor and analyze the impact of diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts from the top down, through regularly held meetings and action plans that allow for responses that fit the needs of our employees.

### *3.2. Foster and sustain a workplace culture of diversity, equity, and inclusion.*

Action	Status
Comply with applicable laws and regulations related to Equal Employment Opportunity, diversity, equity, and inclusion and train all employees regarding requirements.	Ongoing
Use engagement surveys and other forms of employee feedback to identify workplace dimensions impacting diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts.	Ongoing
Encourage leadership to routinely discuss the importance of diversity, equity, and inclusion as a core organizational strategy.	Ongoing
Prompt leaders and managers to use their positions to promote a consistent and positive attitude for diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts.	Ongoing

### *Highlights*

Due to the pandemic and social distancing, our workplace looks unlike it ever has. However, while working remotely, the need for a workplace culture that is imbued with diversity, equity, and inclusion, has never been more clear—or more necessary. To help foster the connection between our remote workplaces and our commitment to building a better understanding of our different cultures, gender, and social histories, the OIG Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee shared information on heritage and awareness months. This information provided an opportunity for OIG staff to learn about and celebrate the richness of our cultural heritages, including Black, Hispanic, and Asian-American and Pacific Islander histories. We also commemorated the vital roles of women and Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, and Related communities in American history.

The OIG will continue to follow the applicable laws and regulations regarding issues of diversity, equity, and inclusion as we strive to promote a positive attitude and set a high bar. We will continue to encourage and provide opportunities for awareness, cultural and societal celebrations and commemorations, training, discussions, and feedback from all employees on their experiences with diversity, equity, and inclusion.





# The Path Forward— Planned Actions FY 2021

In FY 2020, the OIG delivered on its goals to implement a diversity, equity, and inclusion initiative. In FY 2021, we look to take those implementation efforts to the next level. Our path forward will include leading, listening, learning, and creating new opportunities and avenues that will enable the OIG to attract and retain great talent from all segments of society. We will continue to expand our corporate culture that encourages collaboration, flexibility, and fairness so we can continue to meet our mission, exceed our goals, and produce quality work that is accessible to the diverse public we serve.

## FY 2021 Action Goals

The following are our goals for our Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Initiative for FY 2021. In addition, we will produce internal procedural guidance for complying with White House Executive Order 13950, and any changes or guidance pertaining thereto, as necessary. We will report on our progress in achieving these goals in our progress report for FY 2021.

## FY 2021 Action Goals

### **Goal 1: Build a framework for diversity, equity, and inclusion that is predicated on the need for awareness of human differences in the workforce.**

- Develop governance documents for the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee.
- Promote awareness of diversity, equity, and inclusion throughout OIG.
- Create opportunities for engagement and education.
- Incorporate diversity, equity, and inclusion action items in employee engagement action plans.
- Create a maturity assessment model.

### **Goal 2: Foster diversity, equity, and inclusion by building a diverse workforce that will help achieve the OIG vision of excellence in government service.**

- Evaluate hiring initiatives to leverage and measure diversity.
- Issue an OIG-specific antidiscrimination notice.
- Issue an OIG-specific antiharassment policy.
- Develop a recruitment campaign that establishes partnerships with minority-serving institutions.
- Increase veteran outreach efforts.
- Include applicant demographic survey in the recruitment process.
- Implement an accountability system throughout the organization.
- Use data collection, analysis, and reporting to assist in assessing diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts.
- Develop “proud to be” milestones for a multiyear talent acquisition strategy that leverages diversity.

### **Goal 3: Sustain diversity, equity, and inclusion by committing to a work environment that promotes diversity and equal opportunity, fosters mutual trust, respect for human rights, and no discrimination.**

- Expand the OIG ombudsman program.
- Develop and implement diversity, equity, and inclusion training opportunities for leaders and staff in compliance with Federal requirements.
- Develop and implement OIG-wide student internship program.
- Demonstrate progress in eliminating employment barriers.
- Produce an annual Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Initiative progress report.



Our commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion in the workplace is more than just an initiative, a program or policy for the OIG; it is a part of our foundational principle that sets the tone for how the OIG identifies efficiency, effectiveness, and integrity within our teams and offices. Diversity in the workforce brings people with different backgrounds together to integrate ideas that benefit everyone. Inclusion inspires innovation, cultivates new ideas, and fosters a welcoming culture. Equity ensures the fair treatment, equal access, opportunity, and advancement of and for all employees. Encouraging diversity, equity, and inclusion enhances the work environment and provides an experience where all employees value each other and the unique contributions each employee brings to the table.

At the OIG, we believe that through our Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Initiative, we will improve our work and become an even better, higher performing 21st century organization that is open to the contributions, skills, and strengths, which is achieved through a diverse, inclusive, and equitable, workforce.



*The OIG's mission is to promote the efficiency, effectiveness, and integrity of U.S. Department of Education programs and operations on behalf of America's taxpayers and students.*



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